

CONNECTICUT MARINE TRADES ASSOCIATION

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February 23, 2009

Environment Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: **Proposed Bill No. 5206 AA Establishing an Inland Waters Commercial Vessel Operator's License**

Chairmen Meyer and Roy;

Distinguished members of the Environment Committee, the Connecticut Marine Trades Association (CMTA) urges you to not support **Proposed Bill No. 5206 AA Establishing an Inland Waters Commercial Vessel Operator's License**.

The Recreational Marine Industry in Connecticut has over 450 businesses and employs about 10,000 hard working people and every business and every employee has felt the impacts of this disturbing economy. Any additional restrictions to boating or enjoying the water must be warranted and affordable. This bill's initiative is neither.

- Connecticut has very few navigable waters that are not part of the federal navigation system and thereby governed by and under the authority of the U.S. Coast Guard. The upper Housatonic River and large lakes like Candlewood Lake would be the exceptions.
- Anyone operating a vessel in a commercial use carrying passengers for hire in federal navigable waters must be licensed by the U.S. Coast Guard.
- There are no current requirements for such a Connecticut license and CMTA is unaware of any commercial ventures that are operating on only state waters that could require a commercial operator's license.
- Establishing a Commercial Vessel Operator's License is a costly process with very few takers, not a project to consider at this time. If the demand was evident for such a license, simply require inland operators to have an appropriate U.S. Coast Guard license.

We urge you to not support **Proposed Bill No. 5206 AA Establishing an Inland Waters Commercial Vessel Operator's License**. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue and please know that we are available to discuss this at any time.

Sincerely,

John S. Johnson
Legislative Chair

Grant W. Westerson
Executive Director

Linda A. Kowalski
The Kowalski Group